

Pentwater Bible Church

Christmas Message
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The Nativity and The Star artist unknown

Daniel E. Woodhead – Pastor Teacher

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The Star That Led the Magi

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In our last session we explored the Magi. We learned exactly who they were and what their mission was. God spoke to the Magi through the prophet Daniel to let them know 600 years earlier that His Messiah would be coming. Daniel was the prime minister of Babylon during two successive administrations; the Babylonians and Media-Persia. God wants us to know Him and enjoy His glory. The intent of the physical universe is to declare and display the majesty and glory of its Creator. Our message today will reveal a portion of His will in this regard.

Matthew 2:1–12

¹Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem, ²saying, Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him. ³When Herod the king had heard these things, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him. ⁴And when he had gathered all the chief priests and scribes of the people together, he demanded of them where Christ should be born. ⁵And they said unto him, In Bethlehem of Judea: for thus it is written by the prophet,

(From Micah 5:2) “⁶And thou Bethlehem, land of Judah, Art in no wise least among the princes of Judah: For out of thee shall come forth a governor, Who shall be shepherd of my people Israel. “

*⁷Then Herod privily called the Wise-men, and learned of them exactly what time the star appeared. ⁸And he sent them to Bethlehem, and said, Go and search out exactly concerning the young child; and when ye have found him, bring me word, that I also may come and worship him. ⁹And they, having heard the king, went their way; and lo, **the star, which they saw in the east, went before them, till it came and stood over where the young child was.** ¹⁰And when they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy. ¹¹And they came into the house and saw the young child with Mary his mother; and they fell down and worshipped him; and opening their treasures they offered unto him gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh. ¹²And being warned of God in a dream that they should not return to Herod, they departed into their own country another way (KJV).*

The star they saw guided them to Jerusalem (east to west) and then on to Bethlehem (north to south). This was a special star identified as “His Star.” This star appeared to them while they were in the east and they knew that it signified the Christ or Messiah had arrived. God uses the stars in the heavens to bring messages to the world about Himself. In today’s study we will explore how God uses the stars to communicate to us and then we will conclude with a discussion of the special star of Bethlehem. We must always remember that Satan

has corrupted God's message to us and the message in the stars is typical of that corruption. Nevertheless, Christ told us to search the Scriptures (John 5: 39). This we must do to understand what God wants us to know.

On the fourth day of creation God made the stars in the heavens.

Genesis 1: 14-18

¹⁴And God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of heaven to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days and years: ¹⁵and let them be for lights in the firmament of heaven to give light upon the earth: and it was so. ¹⁶And God made the two great lights; the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night: he made the stars also. ¹⁷And God set them in the firmament of heaven to give light upon the earth, ¹⁸and to rule over the day and over the night, and to divide the light from the darkness: and God saw that it was good (ASV, 1901).

One of the reasons for making the stars in the heavens was for a sign. A sign signifies or represents something. One dictionary defines a sign as:

An object, quality, or event whose presence or occurrence indicates the presence or occurrence of something else

Signs therefore, are meant to lead one to something else. The sign itself is not the end meaning. It is the method employed to direct our attention to something else. In the stars God is the direct object the signs point to. We should realize that His entire creation which theologians call "general revelation," speak to Him and coming from Him. In fact God charges all mankind to know Him through the 'signs' He has provided.

Romans 1: 20

²⁰For the invisible things of him since the creation of the world are clearly seen, being perceived through the things that are made, even his everlasting power and divinity; that they may be without excuse (KJV):

God is trying to tell us things about Himself through the stars in the heavens. The heavens declare His creative output.

Psalms 19: 1-6

¹The heavens declare the glory of God; And the firmament showeth his handiwork. ²Day unto day uttereth speech, And night unto night showeth knowledge. ³There is no speech nor language; Their voice is not heard. ⁴Their line is gone out through all the earth, And their words to the end of the world. In them hath he set a tabernacle for the sun, ⁵Which is as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, And, rejoiceth as a strong man to run his course. ⁶His going forth is from the end of the heavens, And, his circuit unto the ends of it; And there is nothing hid from the heat thereof (ASV, 1901)

This psalm of David announces that the heavens declare the glory (splendor) of God's

handiwork. Verse one is a summary statement: the majestic Creation is evidence of the even more majestic Creator-God. The heavens continually (every day and every night) display the fact that there is a Creator. Even though Creation does not speak audibly as humans do its message goes out for all the earth to witness. The message from nature about the glory of God reaches all nations, and is equally intelligible to them all. It is a universal language.

The stars in the heavens move around a circular path. The band of stars on both sides of this path (circuit), which is known today as the Zodiac, is called the Mazzaroth in Hebrew. The names of these stars, Virgo, Pisces, Capricorn, Leo etc., are familiar to us today, because astronomers and navigators designate various areas of the sky with them. Satan has corrupted them for occultic purposes, which are very far from the original truth. The 12 signs have nothing to say about man, however they do have a great deal to say about God's plan of redemption for mankind - from the virgin birth (Virgo) to the triumph of the Lion of the Tribe of Judah (Leo).

The stories He is trying to tell us about are directed straight at Himself. He wants us to know and acknowledge Him through these “signs.”

Isaiah 40:26

²⁶Lift up your eyes on high, and see who hath created these, that bringeth out their host by number; he calleth them all by name; by the greatness of his might, and for that he is strong in power, not one is lacking (ASV, 1901).

God wants us to see Him *through* these stars. He is not in the stars, as some would believe. He created them. He wants us to realize just how powerful He is. God, who cannot be compared to anyone or anything knows everything about His Creation and sustains it. In His strength He created and also controls and sustains millions upon millions of stars, each one of which He, amazingly, has named. In Isaiah chapters 40-66, God is revealed as the Creator and Maker. He does not want us to worship the stars, as in astrology (Isaiah 47: 13-14; Deuteronomy 4: 19; 17: 2-5; Isaiah 47: 13-14). *He wants us to worship Him.*

Amos 5:8

⁸seek him that maketh the Pleiades and Orion, and turneth the shadow of death into the morning, and maketh the day dark with night; that calleth for the waters of the sea, and poureth them out upon the face of the earth (Jehovah is his name) (ASV, 1901).

The psalmist also tells us that God has provided names for the stars as well as knowing exactly how many there are. He is clearly demonstrating His sovereign control over His creation.

Psalms 147:4

⁴ He counteth the number of the stars; He calleth them all by their names (ASV, 1901).

Isaiah 40: 26

²⁶ Lift up your eyes on high, and see who hath created these, that bringeth out their host by number; he calleth them all by name; by the greatness of his might, and for that he is strong in power, not one is lacking (ASV, 1901).

Since God has created the heavens and the stars as signs pointing to Him and His message for us it should not be surprising that Satan has corrupted it along with the rest of God's creation. The specific signs that the stars told have been obscured with satanic corruption.

MAZZAROTH OR CONSTELLATIONS

The Jewish historian, Josephus, attributes the origin of astronomy to Seth, the third male offspring of Adam after Able and Cain. (Antiquities of the Jews, Chapter 2:3). Seth was born when Adam was 130 years old. He further refers to Seth as virtuous and of excellent character, and reports that his descendants invented the wisdom of the heavenly bodies (astronomy). The Hebrew word for the constellations is Mazzaroth. We see this word in in the plain text of Scripture. The first appearance of the word is in Job chapter thirty-eight. God is having a discussion with Job. In order to demonstrate Job's weakness as a man compared to the power of God He uses the constellations as an example.

Job 38: 31-33

³¹ Canst thou bind the cluster of the Pleiades, Or loose the bands of Orion? ³² Canst thou lead forth the Mazzaroth in their season? Or canst thou guide the Bear with her train? ³³ Knowest thou the ordinances of the heavens? Canst thou establish the dominion thereof in the earth (ASV, 1901)?

Job 9: 7-9

⁷ That commandeth the sun, and it riseth not, And sealeth up the stars; ⁸ That alone stretcheth out the heavens, And treadeth upon the waves of the sea; ⁹ That maketh the Bear, Orion, and the Pleiades, And the chambers of the south (ASV, 1901);

Job is the oldest book in the world. It was written during the period of the patriarchs who lived at the time of events of the book of Genesis. It clearly shows that God had named the constellations by that time. The Zodiac of astrology was originally the Mazzeroth of Job 38. It got corrupted like all things beginning with the fall. Then the worldwide communication disruption at the tower of Babel caused all human communication to become corrupt. Satan will use any circumstance to corrupt what God is doing. He had willful servants in Nimrod and his followers attempting to reach for heaven. The signs of the Mazzeroth are not figures in the sky. They are actually a set of stars with names that mean the figure that they describe. We are not to follow the Zodiac and its perverse soothsaying however, we are instructed to be neither afraid of the message of the stars.

Jeremiah 10: 1-6

¹ ye the word which Jehovah speaketh unto you, O house of Israel: ² thus saith Jehovah, Learn not the way of the nations, and be not dismayed at the signs of

heaven; for the nations are dismayed at them. ³ For the customs of the peoples are vanity; for one cutteth a tree out of the forest, the work of the hands of the workman with the axe. ⁴ They deck it with silver and with gold; they fasten it with nails and with hammers, that it move not. ⁵ They are like a palm-tree, of turned work, and speak not: they must needs be borne, because they cannot go. Be not afraid of them; for they cannot do evil, neither is it in them to do good. ⁶ There is none like unto thee, O Jehovah; thou art great, and thy name is great in might (ASV, 1901).

The signs of the Mazzeroth are not figures in the sky. They are actually a set of stars with names that mean the figure that they describe. If you look at the pictures that astrology says the stars depict you will require a vivid imagination to see the pictures they allegedly describe. This is the corruption.



Virgo, a woman with a branch in the right hand and an ear of corn in her left hand

This is not the message that God created for a sign in the heaven with the Mazzaroth. There are twelve constellations in the Mazzaroth. Each of them has three sub-constellations called decans. There are a total of forty-eight sets of stars bringing forth God's message to us. Each constellation has a message and so do each of the decans. It is the *names* of these stars and star groupings through which He communicates His message. The problem we have discerning the message is that it has been corrupt for so long that we don't have accurate information regarding its nature.



In Hebrew Virgo is Bethulah = Virgin who bears

Names in the sign:

Hebrew Tsemech = Branch

Hebrew Zavijaveh = Gloriously Beautiful

1st decan:

Hebrew Coma = The Desired One

2nd decan:

Hebrew Centaurus= The Despised

3rd decan:

Hebrew Bootes = The Coming One

The corruption causes some of the Hebrew words to be unavailable to us. The constellation in Virgo explains that this coming "Branch" will be a child, and that He should be the "Desire of all nations." The ancient name of this constellation is Coma, the desired, or the

longed for. We have the word used by God in in Haggai 2:7 "The Desire of all nations shall come."

The ancient Zodiacs pictured this constellation as a woman with a child in her arms. Albumazar, an Arabian astronomer of the eighth century, says, "There arises in the first decan, as the Persians, Chaldeans, and Egyptians, and the two Hermes and Ascalius teach, a young woman whose Persian name denotes a pure virgin, sitting on a throne, nourishing an infant boy having a Hebrew name, by some nations called Ihesu, with the signification Ieza, which in Greek is called Christos." Blessed One, "the Desire of all Nations." The ancient Egyptian name for this constellation was Shes-nu, the desired son! Some view the constellation of Coma in which "the Star of Bethlehem" appeared. There was a traditional prophecy, well known in the East, carefully preserved and handed down, that a new star would appear in this sign when He whom it foretold should be born (Numbers 24:17).

THE STAR THAT APPEARED TO THE MAGI:

German astronomer, mathematician and writer, Johannes Kepler in 1607 believed he identified the Christmas star that guided the Magi or "Wise Men" to where Jesus was born, and with precise event and date. To Kepler the "Star of Bethlehem" was a planetary conjunction of Jupiter, Mars and Saturn in the evening sky, described to mean a close approach of planets in the sky. Many others have struggled to find natural explanations for the star. The fact that God controls all things in all times and all places leads us to look to Him for an explanation. Therefore, it must be an appearance of the Shekinah Glory.

The Shekinah Glory is a visible manifestation of the presence of God in time and space. In the Old Testament most of these manifestations took the form of light, fire or a cloud including some combination of these.

He appears in the Old Testament in the following manners:

1. The Garden of Eden as fellowship with Adam and Eve
2. Meeting with Abraham as a smoking furnace.
3. To Moses as a burning bush.
4. During the Exodus as a pillar of fire and a cloud.
5. On Mount Sinai as a cloud, thunder and lightening as well as a trumpet.
6. A kind of visible manifestation to Moses said to be His back.
7. Dwelling within the Tabernacle and Temple and lighting the brazen altar in the Temple as fire coming down from Heaven.
8. Departing from the Temple.

In the New Testament He appeared:

1. To the shepherds and the Magi as the Christmas Star.
2. He also came as flesh (John 1: 1-14) in the body of Jesus.
3. At the Transfiguration as a white lit Jesus.
4. Tongues of fire to the apostles.
5. Bright light on the Damascus road to Saul.
6. Smoke in the Tribulation Temple from Revelation 15:8.
7. At the Second Coming as Matthew 24:30.

8. In the Millennium as the Risen Jesus ruling the world (Ezekiel 43: 1-7a).
9. In the Eternal Order as seen in revelation 21: 1-3; 10-11 and 23-24.

After the Shekinah Glory appeared to the shepherds announcing the birth of Jesus the Messiah it next appeared to the Magi. The star led them to Israel. It appeared to them on at least two occasions. It led them from the east to the west and from the north to the south. It finally stood over the very house where the child Jesus was; and was unique to Jesus and no other. Coming in the form of special light this was a physical manifestation of the Shekinah Glory announcing the birth of the Messiah to a group of Gentiles from Babylonia.

NEXT MESSAGE: THE DIVINE BIRTHPLACE OF JESUS

E-mail: Pentwaterbiblechurch@scofieldinstitute.org **Call: Toll Free 877-706-2479**